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Thus saying, he swung his powerful war club and dashed out the brains of the Comanche, who fell headlong into the spring, which to this day remains rank and nauseous. To perpetuate the memory of Ausaqua, who was renowned in his tribe for his valor and nobleness of heart, Wan-Kan-aga struck with the avenging club a hard flat rock which overhung the rivulet and forthwith the rock opened into a round, clear basin, which instantly filled with sparkling water—sweetest that thirsty hunter ever drank."

So the two springs remain, the great spring and the Fountain at Manitou, but from that day the mighty tribes of the Shos-shone and Comanche have remained severed and apart.

Each tribe and each locality possesses a rich fund of these hereditary legends, which we have scarcely touched today, but as the prairies stretching out from the base of Pikes Peak are covered at this season with their carpet of brilliant flowers, let us see them through the eyes of the Indian who believed that in the early summer when the first glistening rainbow appeared in the sky, it fell upon the earth and colored with its delicate hues all the budding flowers, and when the stars shyly peep out from the evening sky, they are not what you think they are at all—they are the sparks from the camp fire of the

Great Spirit to shed light on our uncertain trail while the sun is asleep.

Have we then no myths and traditions when these Indian legends adorn each snow-covered summit, are carried along on the current of the rushing rivers, lie hidden in the depths of the silent canyons or bubble from each crystal spring—and no historical background when our history reaches into a limitless past?

One who has heard the echoes, answers:
 "Buried cities, broken tools, shattered ornaments,
 Discarded things of dear desire,
 Shards, and rock-carved hieroglyph
 Mark where spent peoples, sun-worshippers all
 Sleep in cave, cliff, gravel and pyramid,
 Rich memories of crowded yesterdays.
 Upon these—dream you of life, yet to pulse in your tense silences?—
 Each day a hushed and sudden dawn
 Dissolves in crinkly heat,
 Ending in purpling slopes and high mounting sunsets:
 A glowing prophecy that holds us thrall.
 "The trails by well and water-hole
 And wide mesh of caravan tracks
 Run from the things that were
 To the things to be.
 Weaving that never ends,
 Dawns and sunsets,
 World old memories,
 Dreams and prophecies—
 You hold us thrall."*

*Quoted from poem by T. A. McDougall, Desert Laboratory, Tucson, Arizona.

THE FORMULA OF THE WESTERN NOVEL

BY WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE, *Author, Denver, Colorado*

The Western novel, one gathers from its critics, is in a piteous condition. It has become a thing of rule and rote, formula-built, a bit of carpenter work prepared from plans and specifications that have been standardized like Edison's concrete house.

This is a definite enough complaint, and it has its just weight. A writer in a recent magazine article suggests that a certain very popular author—who, by the way, lives in the West—probably labels

his characters courage, meanness, piety, suspicion, ignorance, etc., and gives them personal names only after his story is finished. Perhaps. I don't know his methods, but very likely he relies on the fact that most of us are alike as God's little apples. The great reading public is confused by subtleties and resents them.

The tremendous popularity of the formula-constructed novel is a source of continual surprise and sometimes despair to those of cultivated taste. It need not be

a surprise. Writers who have had their work presented through the medium of the moving picture know how inevitably the fineness is worked out of the characters and the personality out of the story. The whole thing is standardized. For the motion-picture producer has discovered that the public wants the commonplace. It thrills to simple elemental emotions presented without refinement of motive. So the commonplace writer—sans style, taste, ideas, subtlety, or truth to life—dealing with elementals in an elemental way, appeals to the big reading audience.

It has always been so. Until human nature changes it always will be. The most popular writer in England is a gentleman named Nat Gould, whom most of us never heard of. He writes racing stories, I think. Hawthorne and Poe had no such following as that eminent classic, E. P. Roe.

Our eccentricities and our individualities are trifling compared with our conformities. The tendency of a highly complicated society is to iron out, on the surface, those differences. On certain occasions we all wear the same kind of clothes. A hundred thousand men and women in the United States today will murmur "No clubs?" to their partners across the bridge table in exactly the same tone of voice. Differentiations become subtle. The mediocre writer, slenderly equipped for his business, unable to probe far below the surface, often harks back to a more primitive society with its less specialized types. His alternative is to treat a highly synthesized social condition so superficially as to ignore its difficulties.

To such writers the West is a tempting field. Its winning is one of the world's great epical themes. From all states and nations its builders poured, young, ardent, hopeful, strong. Round the Horn in clipper ships, across the fever-swept Isthmus, by the long, dusty Overland Trail, they came into the Golden West to seek fortune. They laughed at hardship. They wrote songs of defiance to bad luck and sang them while they toiled and starved and died. Self-contained and confident,

they gutted mountains, made deserts leafy green, built cities that were the marvel of their generation. They tramped with audacious hope over new dim trails to fell forests and drove the plowshare through the sod of unbroken prairies. Into the Great American Desert, as the geographers called it, strode the pick of the world's adventurous youth and were swallowed up by it.

The building of the West is an absorbing subject, broad and elemental enough to capture the brave imagination of the young. Their eager eyes visualize that gay light-stepping West, which walked through tragedy with the sun on its face, which clung always to the exaggerated sense of humor which lifted it over all vicissitudes. Whether he had them in mind or not, the poet expresses these pioneers when he writes:

"Others, I doubt not, if not we,
The issue of our toils shall see,
And (they forgotten and unknown)
Young children gather as their own
The harvest that the dead had sown."

The canvas is a big one. If the finished picture is tawdry, lacks depths, or fails to show an illusion of life, the artist must be to blame.

In the flood of Western novels there are some which contain a good deal of obvious carpenter work, a good many strained situations, much unreality. Some show characteristics rather than character in action. It may be confessed that the Western novel is usually more naive, lacks brilliancy in style, often displays no deep insight, and has no background of culture. In the West we live too much in a concrete world. The importance of character study is undervalued.

But can we fairly localize these generalizations? Are feebleness of imagination, aridity of observation, and lack of originality the peculiar defects of writers who deal with the West?

The writer of Western fiction offers one suggestion in his defence. There is a tradition of Western fiction from which it is hard to escape. He is not wholly his own master. If he were to write a story of how

Hans Ukena raised peas and lettuce on a five-acre irrigated patch and thought of wooing Frieda Reincke with onions and cabbages instead of Cherokee roses and Lowney's chocolates, but decided after reflection to remain a bachelor, his audience would dwindle, his publishers might protest. Certainly his car would go gasless.

When all is said, art is not sectional. The standard of literary judgment lies in certain enduring principles that have come to common acceptance. These apply equally to all fiction, no matter where its setting.

There is in all genuine fiction a sense of life, a human quality expressed in terms of the writer's personal philosophy. That which lifts a novel out of the commonplace is the personality of the writer. A novel is an individual expression of life, is the product of a man's reaction toward it. It is based upon ideas about life. If these run in a groove it is because the writer's thinking has become standardized.

The theme of the novelist is life, no less. The novel is a picture of life, but a singularly elastic one. It need not conform to established practice. It may roam over the whole field of human endeavor and emotion, so only it finds the significance of them. The most intriguing thing about writing is that there is always the chance of doing something bigger than you are, of thinking better than your average, of finding felicitous words to express your thought. A writer may plow through his theme without learning or style or even good taste, but ideas of some sort he must have. To express the beautiful, to show the good: these are more important than technique. For life after all is bigger than art. The fit and striking word is all very well, but many a man has had a very pretty style with nothing of value to wrap up in it.

I recall telling the wife of a popular novelist, in the salad days of my youth before I knew Browne's Chop House and was accustomed to meeting many of my craft, that it must be a great pleasure to listen to the good group talks of the writers in New York.

"Yes," she said dryly, "there's a lot of good talk—about the prices they get."

There is too much talk of that sort, both among writers themselves and on the part of the public. Quantity of sales is sometimes thought of as the standard. The secretary of a very popular novelist recently sent out a statement to the newspapers telling how many cars would be necessary to ship the advance orders of his new book and how often these many hundred thousands of copies would or would not, if put end to end, reach to the moon and back. There are moments when one feels that the depreciated dollar mark is stamped all over our present-day literature. It is the hall mark of success. Too often the question is not, "How good a piece of work is this?" but, "How will it get by with the public?"

Don't blame the poor writer too much for this. He is a product of his environment. Probably the literature of America today reflects pretty well its life.

The most engaging quality in fiction is freshness. Those of us who are fencing with the encroaching years recall the tremendous sensation of Kipling's literary arrival, due more than to any other single factor to the new note he had struck. Now freshness must be born of a mind that gets new angles on life, of a man with bubbles in the brain, as someone has put it. His eyes must see and his pen interpret human experience in terms of his own personality.

Most of us see only the obvious. We miss the significance of human action. A story is much more likely to touch us to tears than the lives about us. We lay stress on the wrong things and do not get right relations. It is, comparatively speaking, unimportant how we translate nature, which is a more or less static thing, even though it may be a living stream issuing from the primal cosmic energy, even though it too struggles with nature and is affected by contingency. But human nature is dynamic. The ideas back of it express themselves subtly in motion,

inflections, cadences of the voice, flashes of the eye.

Not long ago I stepped upon a porch and saw a Teddy bear lying there. It had been through the wars. One arm was gone and an eye had been punched out. It lay with legs sprawled out and head twisted. That Teddy bear epitomized a tragedy in human life. For the dirty little hands that had maimed it were now white in death. All which that family had been building for was gone. To me that stuffed monstrosity became at once vitally significant.

It is a characteristic of the formula-built novel that of its very nature freshness must be lacking. For freshness is of the spirit. It springs from personality. The poor jerry-built Western novel, with its paraphernalia of chaps and cowboys and Indians and six-guns, with its dreadful humor of misspelt words and oaths and bad grammar, cannot by any chance have the freshness that comes from original observation, genuine insight, and feeling for truth. But you will find that freshness in the short stories of Peter Kyne and Manlove Rhodes. You will find it in Wister's *Virginian* and Stewart Edward White's *Arizona Nights*. You will find it in Caroline Lockhart's *Me Smith* and in Frank Spearman's *Whispering Smith*.

The principal change in the novel during recent years, as I see it, is that it relates itself closer to the social order, and in that respect has become more highly synthesized. George Eliot does not appear to have been moved by the modern spirit of unrest. She was Victorian completely. Her characters were in that condition of society in which it had pleased God to put them. If they reacted against this they were rebels. Even Thackeray, whose keen analytical mind must have given him many doubts of the social structure, shows us life on the whole as an individual struggle.

Not so with the modern. The life of the community is no longer only a background for the characters. It is the thing that shapes them, drives them, dwarfs

them, educates them, and swallows them up. The characters are merely expressions of this life. As we read of Mr. Polly for instance or of the Forsytes, we are impressed by the feeling that they are individuals struggling in the current of an environment altogether too strong.

In the earlier novelists the framework of their philosophy was traditional. The moderns are idol breakers. If Thackeray was a novelist of manners and George Eliot of character, as has been said, then Wells, we may add, is a novelist of ideas. He is one of the originators of the novel of idea, a new departure in the field.

Kipling is no longer a prophet to us because we discovered that he had ceased to grow with the times. His mind has become cast. He has settled down into a voice for the copy book maxims, an apologist for the God of Things As They Are. In short he stands for the British ruling caste. Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy are not static. We may laugh at Wells sometimes and we do. He reminds us of a child with a tremendously active imagination sitting on the floor cutting out paper men and women. Sometimes, with a little flourish, he snips out a bigger figure and labels it God. But the significant fact is that his mind is always busy and never afraid to take the works to pieces to have a look at what makes the wheels go round.

One complaint of the critics is that the Western novel has none of this social consciousness. It has not a great deal. That is true. Neither had "the beautiful bare narrative of Robinson Crusoe," as Lamb calls it, yet to this day we devour it with delight. The novel of adventure and the novel of character are distinct achievements. It is easy to be rather scornful of the novel in which the characters move rapidly and with energy to their appointed destinies. Yet the tale of action is in itself as worthy as the story of ideas. It may just as truly reveal the springs that move to action, may just as finely show the characters betraying themselves in deeds as another type of fiction shows them betraying themselves in words. *The Sheriff*

of *Badger* (Pattullo) is as true to life as *Mr. Polly* (Wells). Eugene Manlove Rhodes' *Jeff Bransford* is as much a product of his environment as Bennett's *Denry* and is much less a *jeu d'esprit*.

"Romance is the poetry of circumstance," Stevenson says. What spells romance to one of us does not to another. I have walked down Broadway beneath its gleaming night lights, the rain splashing down on the shining street, and found in a solitary closeshut cab whirling on its way, some savor of romance. You smile perhaps, but your own imaginations are as tricky.

The insatiable demand for the Western story finds its spring in the imagination of the readers. The West is the home of romance. The clerk picks up a stirring tale of tangled trails and his own drab life vanishes. He too is walking the edge of that dangerous cliff, a target for the bullets of the rifles in the valley far below. He too gallops across the prairie with the heroine, the sun in his eyes and the wind in his face. It is the same way with the schoolboy. His eyes are on the algebra in front of him, but his thoughts are far afield. He is creeping through Twin Buttes Notch with Yorky to see the rustlers drive the stolen herd south.

Recently I had occasion to note the effect of a Western novel on a boy of six. His parents read it aloud in the evening. That little fellow's mind was a blank page upon which every incident and character was written. He knew that story from beginning to end as the author could never hope to know it. The hero of the novel and his friends strode with jingling spurs through his imagination as supermen. He lived his waking hours in that story. While he was dressing alone he could be heard talking its lingo. When his mother undressed him at night he would say, "Let's talk about Bucky and Reddy now." At breakfast one morning he startled his parents by saying quite as a matter of course, with the perfect innocence of a baby, "Where the hell's that

damn knife?" The night readings ceased. Billie is still wondering why.

If I may quote Stevenson again: "We are all homesick, in the dark days and black towns, for the land of blue skies and brave adventures in forests and in lonely inns, on the battlefield, in the prison, on the desert isle."

That homesickness justifies the novel in which there is swift movement. "The good novel of character is the novel I can always pick up, but the good novel of adventure is the novel I can never lay down," Agnes Repplier tells us in one of her delightful essays. But I have no time to embark again on the old quarrel between the novel of character and the novel of incident. Yet I point out one significant fact: The scenes in fiction that stand out in your memory are climax incidents and not bits of character analysis.

You may take it as axiomatic that every writer sees beauty in his theme, no matter how sordid it may seem. He loves the thing he is writing about, and he flames with a passionate desire to impart that vision to the reader. The tragedy of every artist's work is that his product fails to picture adequately his inner vision of beauty and truth. He finds compensation in the fact that the reader or the spectator, having that vision alight in his mind too, supplies the lack and remedies the artist's failure.

A man's work depends ultimately of course upon the texture of his mind. This reflects itself on his work. It mirrors his philosophy of life as well as his literary convictions and theories of art. Fielding and Scott are still giants, because of their first-class minds. With all his array of talents Dickens is passing out of the ranks of the great writers because he had essentially, at bottom, a commonplace mind.

If I have seemed to talk a good deal about life in connection with the novel, it is because life is of the very warp and woof of it. The novel must have the very color of life. Nothing less will do to make of it a vital thing. Except in the

case of a fantasy, a pure romance, or a mystery story, this illusion of life must be sustained. A factory-made novel, turned out by machinery, cannot possibly stand the acid test.

But in this the Western novel is not in a

class by itself. It must be judged by the same standards as the novel of the East or of the South, of Paris or Boston or London. Insofar as it is a true picture of life it succeeds. Where it misses truth it fails.

REPORTS OF SECRETARY, TREASURER, TRUSTEES OF ENDOWMENT FUNDS,
PUBLISHING BOARD AND COMMITTEES, 1919-20.

The two years following the signing of the Armistice constitute a period of readjustment for the American Library Association.

In June, 1919, the fighting had been over for seven months; but the A. L. A. War Service was not over. It was still serving soldiers, sailors and marines in all parts of the world. It was beginning to serve directly and indirectly the discharged men. It was providing reading matter for the service men in hospitals, for men on United States Shipping Board vessels, for some industrial war work communities, and was putting books into Braille, grade 1½, for the war blind.

On November 1, 1919, the Government took over the library work for the soldiers in continental United States; for the Navy and marine corps throughout the world.

With the approval of the Committee of Eleven (United War Work Committee) certain A. L. A. War Service funds (\$105,970), were turned over to the Army and Navy for library purposes; and the budget for the several hundred thousand dollars remaining (about \$800,000 as of Jan. 1) provided for service to—

Discharged soldiers, sailors and marines,
The war blind,

Certain industrial war work communities,

United States Shipping Board vessels
and other merchant marine vessels,

Public Health Service hospitals,

Ex-service men in civilian hospitals,

Lighthouses and lightships,

Coast Guard stations,

Paris Headquarters and troops outside
of continental United States.

The attention of many people was directed to library work during the war, and

many men developed a reading and library habit. It was inevitable that new demands would be made upon the American Library Association because of these facts. How the Association should meet these new demands has been discussed in the Secretary's Report for 1919, in the President's address at the Asbury Park Conference, in no end of committee reports, public meetings, and articles in library periodicals. Naturally there has been some difference of opinion among members as to what should be done. Apparently all believe, however, that the Association should do something more than it has been able to do in the past.

Whether it is to do much or little, whether it is to put itself in a position to give the advisory assistance that can reasonably be expected of it, to issue the publications it ought to issue, and to promote the development of libraries and librarianship through sustained publicity; or whether it is always to be handicapped as in the past for want of funds—these things will be decided within the next few weeks.

The Association has an opportunity which it has never had before. Magazines and newspapers have been generous in their publicity, and prominent men and women throughout the country have readily agreed that there is a big work we should do in promoting library development and the use of books during the next few years.

The Secretary believes the members of the Library Association and the members of the library profession generally feel this demand for a larger service, and that they will, by promoting the appeal for funds, make possible a very great extension of the Association's work.

Secretaryship: Mr. George B. Utley,